

REMARKS

I. Introduction

Claims 7 to 12 are pending in the present application. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

As an initial matter, Applicants note with appreciation the indication that "[t]he claims patentably define over the prior art of record under 35 USC 102 and 35 USC 103."

II. Objection to the Drawings

Regarding the objection to the drawings, drawings are only required "where necessary for the understanding of the subject sought to be patented." 35 U.S.C. § 113. As stated, for example, in M.P.E.P. § 601.01(f), "[i]t has been USPTO practice to treat an application that contains at least one process or method claim as an application for which a drawings is not necessary for an understanding of the invention under 35 U.S.C. 113 (first sentence)" (emphasis added). Since all of the claims of the present application are method claims, it is believed and respectfully submitted that no drawings are required. Withdrawal of this objection is therefore respectfully requested.

III. Rejection of Claims 7 to 12 Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, First Paragraph

Claims 7 to 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph as allegedly failing to comply with the enablement requirement. It is respectfully submitted that these claims sufficiently satisfy the enablement requirement for at least the following reasons.

Although Applicants may not agree with the merits of the rejection, to facilitate matters, claim 7 has been amended, as suggested by the Office Action, to recite, in relevant part, that a method for checking a bore hole includes shaping the bore hole in a workpiece by laser pulses that cause melting of a bore wall. In addition, as regards the assertion by the Office Action that it is unclear how a determination is made that a bore wall has solidified, the Examiner will note that from page 4, line 28 to page 5, line 8, the present Specification states:

In an exemplary embodiment, a characteristic time interval that is suitable for a given workpiece and specific laser parameters is first determined empirically. **To this end, some workpiece material is first melted and then observed during the transition from the molten to the solid phase, using an IR-CCD camera, in order to ascertain characteristic IR signals for the phase transition.** Subsequently, continuous monitoring of a laser bore hole takes place with the aid of this IR-CCD camera. At a time when a relative equilibrium has already come about between energy input by the laser pulses and energy removal by heat transfer via bore hole wall and air, the time characteristic of the bore hole cooling is monitored, starting directly after the end of a laser pulse. **This monitoring is repeated several times and the individual instant determined at which the characteristic signal of the phase transition is achieved at significant points of the bore hole.** (Emphasis added).

Thus, it is clear that an IR-CCD camera may be used to determine the phase transition of the workpiece material from molten phase to solid phase. Furthermore, regarding the assertion by the Office Action that it is unclear why the bore wall would necessarily solidify before the next laser pulse is introduced to the bore hole, the Examiner will note that, as indicated on page 3, lines 6 to 18 of the Specification, the characteristic time interval in which signals from the area of the bore hole are received and evaluated is **defined**, such that it begins, at the earliest, when at least a thin skin of the bore hole wall has resolidified, following a laser pulse, and ends, at the latest, at the start of a subsequent laser pulse. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 7 and its dependent claims 8 to 12 sufficiently satisfy the enablement requirement for at least these reasons.

In view of all of the foregoing, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

IV. Conclusion

In light of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. Prompt reconsideration and allowance of the present application are therefore earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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